



GREEN SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

February 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We wish to inform you that this year our school is working hard on promoting environmental awareness issues through our Green-Schools programme. In the past we have successfully achieved green flag status for our work on recycling, energy saving and water conservation.

Our school is currently participating in its second year of the Green-Schools **Travel programme**. We strive to be successful in achieving our fourth flag by the end of this school year.

A new Green-Schools team was set up in September 2019 and all seven of our members are from sixth class. They have been working hard on different ideas and initiatives to help us achieve success with our new theme. We hope to involve last years' team members in the coming weeks to help us complete all our upcoming activities.

One of the key areas that the Green-Team are focusing on at the moment is improving the air quality around our school, particularly at the school gate! Before Christmas they carried out some great detective work observing the amount of cars **idling** at pick-up time.

What is Engine idling?

Engine idling is any time your car engine is running but you're not moving, usually for more than 10-20 seconds. e.g. waiting outside school, at a red light, roadworks, etc.

Why should we stop Engine Idling?

Running a car without going anywhere just doesn't make any sense! Here are four reasons why:

- **Environment:** When an engine is running, it emits carbon dioxide (CO₂), the main greenhouse gas responsible for climate change. By switching off your engine when stopped, you stop these emissions too!
- **Health:** Idling makes for worse air quality, which is bad for human health. Young people are at greater risk of the health impacts of air pollution because their lungs are still developing.
- **Money:** Idling wastes fuel that you're paying for - that just burns a hole in your pocket!
- **Safety:** When cars are idling outside a school, it is harder for students to hear cars that are actually moving, which might be hidden behind the idling cars.

What is the aim of our campaign?



The aim of our campaign is to raise awareness of air pollution and to ultimately reduce and ideally eliminate idling outside our school gate, so as to increase the air quality and reduce emissions. We ask all parents to get on board and help us achieve our goals!

The Green-Team observed that 70% of parked cars were idling at pick-up time before Christmas. We hope to reduce this number significantly when we survey cars over the coming weeks again.

Sustainable Travel:

One of the main focuses of the travel theme is to promote more active travel by pupils commuting to school and reduce the amount of cars on the road. Unfortunately, we are quite restricted here in Bellewstown, given that it is a rural school with limited footpath access. However, every little helps so we have decided to participate in **The Big Travel Challenge** for the first two weeks of February.

A detailed letter is attached re: **The Big Travel Challenge**, giving lots of examples and suggestions of how you can safely participate in the programme. For those that live a good distance from the school, and a car is necessary, perhaps you could engage in the park 'n' stride' element of the challenge. We fully appreciate that families will not be able to participate each day during the challenge period. Prizes to be won each Friday by the class that makes the best collective effort!

Step into Spring:

To promote physical activity amongst our pupils, we plan to go on a whole school walk around the race course, weather permitting, on **Friday 7th February**. Please ensure children have hats / scarves with them on the day and wellies can be worn too.

Green Code:

We are running a competition from Third to Sixth class to come up with Scoil Naomh Treasa's Green Code based on the Travel theme. The Green-Team have decided that the code must be presented as an acrostic poem. An **acrostic poem** is a **poem** where the first letter of each line spells out a specific word. The word we have chosen is TRAVEL. Individual or group entrants are welcome. Please submit your poem by Thursday 12th February. The winning poems will be announced on Friday 13th February. We look forward to reading what will be undoubtedly be super poems!

Thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards,

Ms Swinburne and the Green-Schools Team